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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT POW Camps: General Conditions/Security Measures/ Treatment of Prisoners/Political Indoctrination/Interrogation/Medical Treatment/Work Assignments

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LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

Marshansk

2. In July 1944, I was captured a second time by the Soviet Army and sent to the prisoner of war camp in Marshansk. This camp was located about five miles outside of Marshansk in a wooded area that partially camouflaged it from the air. The trees that were growing in the middle of the camp were not cut down insofar as they did not interfere with the construction of new barracks. It was about one mile from the Tsna River but I cannot recall whether it was east or west of the river.

3. The Marshansk camp was a large camp with a capacity for from between 20,000 and 25,000 prisoners. Previous to being made a POW camp, it was a Soviet Army camp. The main buildings were stone and about 100 temporary wooden barracks had been built around these permanent buildings. Each barracks accommodated 200 POWs and were furnished with plain wooden double-deck bunks. The permanent stone buildings housed the Soviet Army personnel attached to the camp, the main camp hospital, and the

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4. A railroad siding connected the camp by rail with the city of Marshansk and there was one road from the camp to the city.

5. This camp was first used for POWs in late 1942 and it was filled to capacity from that time until the end of World War II. This capacity may have increased because when I was transferred from this camp in November 1944, new barracks were under construction.

Orsk Area

6. The second POW camp to which I was assigned was in Marksei which camp was called "POW Camp No 235." This camp was 10 miles west of Orsk in which general area there were altogether eight POW camps.

7. Within the city limits of Orsk were camps No 1, 2, and 3. There was another camp in a small village named Novotroisk. Most of my confinement in the Orsk area was in the Marksei camp although I spent some time in camps No 1 and 2 in Orsk as well as in a camp in Novotroisk about five miles from Marksei. Specifically, I was in Marksei from November 1944 to December 1945 and then transferred to Novotroisk for two months. I was then returned to Marksei and stayed there until May of 1948 when I was taken to Orsk Camp No 1 where I remained until that camp was closed and then I was transferred to Orsk Camp No 2 in April 1949 and remained there until that camp was closed in November 1949. I was the last German POW to leave this camp.

8. The capacity of the Marksei camp was 5,000 prisoners and I was in the first group of German POWs to be sent to this camp. At the time of our arrival, this camp was being used for Soviet political prisoners who were evacuated and sent to some other place when we arrived. When I say German POWs, there were also Rumanians, Hungarians, Czech, and some French in our group but the large percentage (at least 90 per cent) were German soldiers. The buildings at Marksei were permanent buildings that had been there for a long time and were in good condition. They had to be good because of the extreme cold in the winter.

9. Orsk Camp No 1 was for special workers who were trained as plumbers, mechanical laborers, truck drivers, and other prisoners in that work category. The capacity in May 1948 was about 2,000 prisoners but this number dwindled until this camp was finally eliminated in April 1949.

10. Orsk Camp No 2 also had a capacity of about 2,000 prisoners when I was first assigned to it in April 1949. Prior to April 1949, Camp No 2 was for those prisoners who were working in the saw mills and a few other unskilled prisoners. After April 1949, this number of prisoners was gradually reduced and when this camp was finally closed in November 1949, there were only eight of us left who had been truck drivers engaged in the transportation of the other prisoners. Orsk Camp No 3 also had a capacity of 2,000 prisoners although I do not know what special group of prisoners were assigned to this camp. All of the buildings at these three camps were of permanent construction.

11. In early 1945 while I was at Marksei, another large camp with a capacity for 15,000 prisoners was built about 11 miles northwest of Orsk and 10 miles northeast of Marksei. I drove a truck carrying building supplies to this camp and saw the construction of about 75 wooden barracks take place. When the camp was first completed, about 6,000 political prisoners were interned at this camp; but by June of 1945, these political prisoners were transferred and 15,000 German POWs arrived. All of these 15,000 were Germans and all of them died from an epidemic of some kind during the last six months of 1945. Part of my duties as a truck driver in July and August 1945 was to take the dead bodies to a burying ground outside of Orsk.

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12. The small camp at Novotroisk had a capacity for about 1,000 prisoners and all the buildings at Novotroisk were temporary wooden buildings.

13. There was also another camp called Kirpichnie with a capacity of 1500 prisoners. This camp was also a temporary wooden camp with the exception of one large stone building and another small stone building which was used as the kitchen. There was one other camp in this Marksei-Novotroisk area west of Orsk. All five of these camps were north of the river that runs west from Orsk. Three camps were located between the river and the highway that runs from Orsk to Kuibyshev and the other two camps, including the one in which the 15,000 German POWs died, were north of this highway.

14. I do not know how many POW camps there were in the USSR although I believe that there were over two million German POWs. In addition to the above camps that I have described, I heard that the other main camps were located in the following areas:

a) Shaliapinsk in the Ural Mountains.

b) Sverdlousk in northern Ural where there were at least seven different camps.

c) Kobel or Kopel in northern Ural in the vicinity of the lead mines where the prisoners worked.

d) Omsk in Siberia.

e) Tomsk in Siberia.

f) Novosibirsk.

g) Tashkent which is in the center of the wheat producing area.

h) Kuibyshev.

i) Saratov.

j) Mednogorsk where there was a very large hospital for POWs, which included also Japanese prisoners.

k) Chumnah which is near the Himalaya Mountains in India. I learned from different sources that there were over 10,000 prisoners in this camp.

Most of my information about these camps came from conversations I had with other prisoners who had been to them and eventually found themselves at Marksei with me.

PHYSICAL SECURITY MEASURES

15. Security measures at all of the camps in which I was interned were very strict. At Marshansk, the camp was very strictly guarded. It was completely enclosed by a wooden fence about 3 1/2 meters high and a wire fence on top of that. For a space about 3 1/2 meters wide on the inside of the wooden fence was a moat-like area of light sand which was raked every morning so that evidence of footprints in this area were plainly seen. Every 200 meters along the outer fence there was a watchtower and all through the night, searchlights lighted the fence in both directions. In addition to Soviet guards, there were a number of watchdogs along the outer edge of the fence.

16. There were no security guards in the barracks although there was one officer and one soldier in charge of internal security and some guards constantly walked around inside the camp [illegible] were assigned to any particular barracks. Each morning at about 5:30 am prisoners were counted at a roll call.

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17. On marching to work outside of the camp, for every 100 prisoners there were three guards in front, three in the rear, and two on each side of the column. There were also three very well trained and vicious German shepherd dogs that were taken on all work parties. The same physical security was maintained over prisoners while they were at work.

18. The security measures at Marksei were more strict than at Marshansk in that there were many more guards and the general attitude towards the prisoners was more brutal. The watchtowers were closer together and in addition to the guards in the towers, there were guards outside the camp patrolling around the camp all night long with dogs. There was also the same sand moat inside the camp fence with guards stationed at regular intervals inside the moat. Physical escape was almost impossible from the camps and I do not know of any successful attempts during the time I was a POW [July 1944 - November 1949]. All of the escape attempts that did take place were from the working parties outside of the camps where it was easier to escape, but none of these were ever successful as far as I know.

CAMP CONDITIONS IN GENERAL

Marshansk

19. Camp conditions at Marshansk were fairly clean and I was fortunate to be assigned to a new barracks. Some of the other older barracks were not quite so good but they were not in general poor. The camp kitchen was located in a permanent stone building and the initial capacity was to feed 20,000 people. This capacity was at times extended. Breakfast was served at about 6 am and each prisoner was given 200 grams of bread and 700 grams of a very liquid soup which consisted mostly of water. Prisoners were also given three or four leaves of cabbage, about one teaspoon of cereal, and one or two pieces of potato peel. The same meal was served to all the prisoners at noon and again at about six o'clock in the evening after they had returned from working parties. The two working details to which I was assigned at Marshansk were near the city and we did not walk back to camp for our noon meal because it was delivered to us by other prisoners assigned to this detail.

20. Sanitary facilities were very primitive and the facilities were inadequate. On some occasions, prisoners would have to wait from one to two hours to use the few toilets in the camp. There was no problem of garbage disposal because everything was eaten, including fish heads.

21. The Marshansk camp had four wells that were capable of supplying water for only about 2,000 prisoners. To supplement this, water was brought from the river one mile away in large wooden barrels and used as drinking water without any effort being made to disinfect it. It was very dirty and because some of the prisoners were so crazed by thirst, they would jump into the barrels. Several drownings occurred this way.

Marksei

22. Camp conditions at Marksei were materially worse in every respect. Food consisted mainly of frozen or spoiled potatoes and cabbage. These vegetables were usually in initial stages of decay. The soup was made without washing or peeling any of its ingredients which were merely thrown in and when the dirt began to rise in the large kettles, a half a bucket of vegetable oil was mixed in with the soup. Prisoners were given 750 grams of soup for the day and 600 grams of bread. At the noon meal, mashed potatoes were added to the soup and bread. No effort was made to make the food eatable.

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23. Sanitary conditions were likewise much worse than in Marshansk. There was only one outside latrine that accommodated 20 people at one time for 4,000 prisoners.

24. What little garbage from the kitchen was dumped in one large hole in the ground but the prisoners were so starved that this garbage was dug up and eaten. No effort was ever made to burn any of the garbage and there was no regular detail for cleaning the latrine.

TREATMENT OF PRISONERS

25. At Marshansk, treatment of the prisoners was generally fair and we were able to walk around inside the camp after returning from working parties. At 5:30 each morning, the roll call was handled by a major and two surgeons who counted prisoners in each barracks and asked each prisoner if he was sick or all right. It did not help to be sick and on one occasion, I was sent out to work with a temperature of 104°.

26. I do not recall the names of the top Soviet officers in this camp. The officer in charge was a full colonel and I heard his name mentioned frequently. I only saw him on two or three occasions as he did not appear very often. He was adequately staffed with assistants who had most of the contact with the prisoners.

27. The treatment of the prisoners inside the camp was not particularly brutal because there were so many prisoners that the Soviets were not able to get mad at any one in particular. On those days that I stayed in the camp, having been excused from work details because of illness, I and the other prisoners in the same position had routine duties such as policing the camp and digging what we called "brown coal" from the ground for heating the barracks. This was actually a peat moss that we dug up and brought back to the camp to be dried and then used in the barracks stoves.

28. Outside the camp the Soviet guards were inclined to be brutal and on some occasions the treatment was dreadful. Many of the prisoners who were so weakened from the lack of food that they could not go as fast as the guards wanted them to move were killed by bayonets when they fell to the ground from exhaustion. During the three months that I was at Marshansk, I saw between 12 and 15 prisoners killed or badly hurt in this way. This treatment in part depended on the guards assigned and it was particularly brutal whenever our guards were Mongols. On the other hand, I remember a sergeant who was in charge of marching our work detail to Marshansk who wanted the prisoners to sing while they were marching. As long as they sang, this sergeant was happy, but if the prisoners stopped singing, he would get mad and beat them with his rifle.

29. The day working parties ended at five in the afternoon at which time the prisoners were marched back to the camp where dinner was served and we were theoretically free except for the detail of collecting wood, being de-liced, and occasionally doing other general camp work.

30. Shortly after my capture in July 1944 and before I ever arrived at Marshansk, a Soviet guard ordered me to take off my German shoes and exchange them with his Russian shoes which were too small for me to wear. Consequently, I arrived at the Marshansk camp barefooted and did not have shoes again for over a year. I also lost my underwear, shirt and stockings in the same manner and the only shirt I had the first year I was a POW was an old sugar sack from the US that I found in the camp. The Soviets did not give any of the German POWs any clothes or supplies of any kind until 1946. Any

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good clothing that the German prisoners had when they arrived in a POW camp was sooner or later stripped from them in exchange for inferior clothing that the Soviet guards were wearing.

31. Three times each week at both Marshansk and Marksei, all the prisoners were de-liced and at least once a week we were sent to the barber who shaved off all our hair including our eyebrows. In the de-licing procedure, prisoners were stripped and their clothes were left in one room outside of the de-licing room. Often on return to pick up clothing, it had been taken by other prisoners as well as some of the guards so that on occasion prisoners returned to their barracks naked and had to remain there until fellow prisoners could find some odd pieces of clothing for them. These activities all happened at night and were part of the routine after the day's work.

32. Every prisoner tried to go to bed as soon as possible because of the extreme fatigue. Although the barracks were furnished with kerosene lamps, there was very little kerosene to be had and no reason to stay up anyway. None of the prisoners were furnished blankets and we slept on the bare planks.

33. There were about 20 attempts at escape from Marshansk during the four months I was in this camp and each one ended tragically. Punishment for attempting to escape was carried out by putting the captured escapees in a ditch that was filled with water up to about the necks of the prisoners. These prisoners were forced to stand in this water without being given any food until they died. Each day a woman doctor came by and asked if they were still alive. After their deaths, they were pulled out of the ditch and their bodies dragged around the camp. At Marksei, prisoners who attempted to escape were all caught and were beaten to death, after which their bodies were placed in the yard for all the other prisoners to walk around.

34. In November 1944, I was one of about 2,500 prisoners who were picked out as being the strongest and the tallest and transferred to Orsk. We were put in freight cars on which the doors were nailed shut. The trip took 14 days and many of the 2,500 prisoners being transferred died en route. Our treatment at Marksei was considerably worse than at Marshansk and we were treated like criminals. Beatings were very frequent for no reason at all and oftentimes prisoners were punished in a number of different brutal ways. For example, one of the favorite forms of punishment was to remove all of the prisoners' clothing and put 50 or 60 men in a barracks with no windows where they would be left in temperatures of 0° and considerably below.

35. The commanding officer at Marksei was a captain named Kudamov and I have never known any person to be so cruel. I could not understand why as a captain in rank he was a commanding officer and had higher ranks including a colonel under him. I remember one morning when 1,000 prisoners were sent out of camp to work and because of the intense cold, about 200 collapsed en route. Kudamov issued orders that the Soviet guards were to tramp on any of the prisoners that fell by the wayside and they were left lying there with no help to get them up. Those who were able to get up and go back to the camp did so, but the others died. If a prisoner broke down physically, he was put naked into a cold room until he either revived or died.

36. The chief doctor at Marksei was also a Russian woman doctor from Moscow who held the rank of major and she was as cruel as Kudamov. This woman doctor examined these prisoners who had broken down and her standard treatment was to accuse them of trying to get out of work. I heard her tell one man that he was as strong as an ox, after which he took three steps and fell down dead.

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37. In the early winter of 1945, my feet froze but that did not enable me to stop working at any time. It was not until I started as a truck driver in the fall of 1945 that I was able to get shoes through a little black market dealing outside of the camp.

38. The camp routine at Marksei was about the same as at Marshansk in that we were up at 5:30 am for a morning roll call and in this camp 10 soldiers and one sergeant in a group did all the counting to make certain that the counting was right. By 6:30 am we had had our breakf . and at seven o'clock started out for work.

39. Our bunks at Marksei were worse than at Marshansk in that there were spaces between the boards like in a fence and rest was almost impossible to obtain. There were also rats in the Marksei barracks as well as lice and bedbugs. The de-licing procedures were the same and were carried out generally three times each week but they were senseless in that the wooden planks in the barracks were covered with lice and as soon as we came back from the de-licing chamber, we were immediately re-infected. As in the other camps, none of the prisoners were given blankets and the poor clothing was in no way adequate for covering.

40. Two of the German POWs who attempted to escape at Marksei were able to get about 500 miles away before they were captured. They were not immediately killed but were punished by being brought back to the camp and then assigned work in a stone quarry nearby where they were forced to work 14 hours a day on only 300 grams of bread. In a short time, they were both dead and their bodies were dragged around the camp. I recall Kudamov telling us prisoners that "None of you will ever get out and you will never see your country again." Fortunately as far as I was concerned, he was transferred before I died. At the time of my capture in July 1944, I weighed over 200 pounds but by June of 1945 after eight months in Marksei plus the four months in Marshansk, my weight was down to about 90 pounds.

POLITICAL INDOCTRINATION

41. There was a steady program of political indoctrination at Marshansk but it was not very effective because of the fatigue of the prisoners plus the half-hearted effort that was put into the program. Every night a Soviet political officer who spoke German came to our barracks and talked for about two hours about Stalin, Marx, and Lenin. It was a strange performance in that the barracks was dark and this man talked while we slept. None of the prisoners showed any interest in the talk because we were all either near to starvation or physically exhausted and the Soviets did not make any attempt to force us to pay attention to the talks.

42. At Marksei, the political indoctrination was of a different kind. There were no evening lectures but every Sunday a large meeting was held in the big dining hall and all prisoners had to appear. If a prisoner did not appear, he was considered a Fascist and a brutal punishment could be expected. There was not consequently as much political indoctrination but it was more concentrated and here again Soviets who spoke German gave long talks on Lenin and Stalin. Again, none of the prisoners actually cared for these talks but all were forced to listen and inasmuch as the physical circumstances were more favorable on a Sunday than late at night, the education was more effective. There was no personal indoctrination at any of these group meetings and at no time while I was a prisoner did anyone try to make a Communist out of me except through this mass indoctrination technique which was completely ineffective. Although the Sunday meetings were held in the daytime, at least half of the audience in the rear slept through the talks.

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INTERROGATION

43. I was interrogated about 25 times during the time that I was a prisoner. The routine interrogations lasted from a half hour to an hour and a half. My first interrogation was at Marshansk where all prisoners were interrogated upon arrival by a team of about 200 Soviets who all spoke German. We were first asked our name, place of birth, age, and details about our family, political association, where we fought and what we had done during the war. It was very obvious that the Soviets were interested in finding out where we had fought and if any atrocities had happened in the areas in which we had fought at the time we were in those areas. Those prisoners were immediately taken out of the camp and sent somewhere in the USSR to stand trial. I do not actually know what happened to any of these soldiers because none of them ever returned to any of the POW camps I was in or to Germany after I was repatriated. The Soviets held soldiers who happened to be in cities where atrocities had taken place responsible for these atrocities.

44. The interrogations at Marshansk were all handled in the open at small tables that were separated by a small partition. There was only one interrogator at each table. The interrogators took detailed notes and I believe that they kept very complete records of all interrogations. At each camp, I was given a number but I got a new number at my arrival at each new camp.

45. The most detailed interrogations as far as I am concerned took place at Marksei where there was considerable more organization than in Marshansk. For the first four weeks after I entered this camp, I was kept more or less in isolation and I was not allowed to leave the barracks. During these four weeks I was interrogated most of the time and this series of interrogations was much more complex. I was questioned repeatedly about where I fought, in which division, and at what time my division was in certain areas. I was also asked when I became a soldier, when I entered the German party, if and when I became a member of the Hitler Youth Organization, where I had travelled in foreign countries, if I had ever been to the USSR before, what I did abroad, for whom I worked, if I was ever a Communist, and if I ever held a membership card in the Communist Party. There were German prisoners who had been Communists in Germany but it did not make a bit of difference because those prisoners were treated as badly by the Soviets as were other prisoners.

46. The interrogations at Marksei were under the direction of a man named Saikens who was a member of the Communist Party and who seemed to have a great deal more to say than did his boss who was a colonel in the Soviet Army. Saikens had many assistants who worked for him including women interrogators. I would say that there were from 30 to 50 interrogators for the 5,000 prisoners.

47. After the main interrogations by the assistants had been completed, I was re-interrogated by Saikens and one assistant as were a large number of other prisoners. Because I happened to be over six feet tall, I was suspected of being a member of the Hitler SS group which is probably one reason I was interrogated so frequently during the first four weeks I was at Marksei. These interrogations generally took place at night, usually around mid-night, and I was called six different times at midnight. During the night interrogation, I was stripped of my clothing and put under large floodlights and my body searched for marks used by the SS. The interrogators never found anything because I never was a member of the SS.

INTERNAL SECURITY SYSTEMS

48. The Soviets maintained an internal security system at each of the camps in which I was interned and to the best of my knowledge, no underground organization existed in any of the camps. In fact, I would say it was

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impossible for an underground organization to exist because there were agents in each barracks. Although most of the prisoners in each barracks were predominantly German, both Marshansk and Marksei had a scattering of Czech, Hungarian, Austrian, Italian, Dutch, Yugoslavian, and Bulgarian prisoners who had fought with the Germans against the USSR. We never knew for certain who the Soviet agents were among the prisoners but they were always from this scattering of foreigners. The Soviets originally designated the Czech prisoners as their assistants and gave the Czechs a considerable amount to say in the running of each camp as a whole and the barracks in particular. The Soviets encouraged the Czechs to help in running the camp by giving them favorable treatment and more food to eat. As overseers in the barracks, the Czech prisoners were not forced to do the heavy labor outside of the camp but were placed in such jobs as food stores, the kitchen, and clothing depot. Their food was cooked better because all of the cooks in the camp were Czechs. In late 1944, most of the Czechs were freed by the Soviets and sent back to Czechoslovakia as so-called partisans and the Polish prisoners who had fought with the Germans against the Soviets were then made chief camp agents in the barracks and did provide a considerable amount of internal security in return for favors granted to them.

49. This same system of secret agents and spies existed at both Marshansk and Marksei. At the latter camp this internal security system was headed by Seikin. In addition to the use of Czech and Polish agents among the prisoners, the Soviets also had a secret police force which worked in a very interesting way. After I had been at Marksei for several months, Seikin gave me the treatment which extended over a period of two or three weeks. Every day after I came back from work, he would say "How are you today? What did you hear today? Did someone say anything about us?" Without waiting for an answer, Seikin would send me to the kitchen for an extra serving of soup and bread; and then on returning to his office, he would ask me more questions, such as "Do you know of any comrades who are saying anything against us?" Seikin told me that a transport was going back to Germany and asked me if I would like to go. He said that I could go if I would help him. At night, I was to listen carefully and if I heard any of my fellow prisoners in the barracks talk about fighting or saying he burned a Soviet house or village, if I would report that to him, he said I could go back to Germany within four weeks. This system did not work very well because some of the prisoners who were sick and practically starved used it as a means to obtain more food. There were some prisoners in such poor physical condition that they would say almost anything to get more food. I do not know of any occasion when action was taken against any of the fellow prisoners because of what some prisoner had reported; in my opinion, however, the organization of agents and spies in the barracks and the camp itself was a strong internal security device.

HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL TREATMENT AND FACILITIES

50. At Marshansk, the main hospital in the permanent buildings was one of the regularly established hospitals for not only prisoners of war but sick Soviet Army personnel. In addition to the main hospital, there were between 15 and 20 barracks filled with sick POWs. All of the medical treatment for POWs was given by captured German doctors who were extremely handicapped in treatment by the lack of facilities and medicines. There was little for the doctor to do but give a diagnosis.

51. To the best of my knowledge, there were only five Soviet doctors at Marshansk including one woman doctor. The only treatment that I know of was the keeping of records and I do not know of any effort ever being made by any Soviet doctor to save any sick POWs. I was never in the

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hospital at Marshansk although on several occasions I was very ill. The most prevalent diseases at Marshansk were typhoid fever, pneumonia, and malaria.

52. Conditions in the hospital at Marksei were about the same as in Marshansk but the brutality of the commanding officer, Kudamov, was reflected in the attitude of the Soviet doctors. I recall one instance where the German doctor in charge of a barracks reported to the Soviet major at the regular morning roll call that he had 80 men sick and that 15 prisoners had died during the night. The major asked the doctor what kind of treatment he had given the men who had died and then charged that he had killed them. The German doctor replied "I am not going to murder my German comrades." The doctor then told the major the prisoners had died of starvation. The major answered "No one dies of starvation in the Soviet Union." The German doctor was then placed under arrest and the major insisted that he had killed all of these prisoners and ordered an autopsy on each of them. It turned out that starvation had caused all 15 deaths. Because of this incident, three years later in 1948 when this German doctor was on his way back to Germany, the NKVD pulled him off a train and shipped him to Siberia and he has not been heard from since.

53. In October 1946, I was admitted to the hospital for seven weeks, suffering from a fever and a nervous breakdown. Despite the cold weather, none of the prisoners in the hospital were given mattresses or blankets. While I was in the hospital, Kudamov decided that he no longer wanted a hospital attached to the Marksei camp and all of the patients were transferred in open trucks to the hospital at the smaller camp in Novotroisk. Upon arrival at the hospital in Novotroisk, the overcrowding became immediately obvious and the commanding officer called all patients in the barracks to which I had been temporarily assigned to report to him. We all got up out of our bunks and he pointed to every other one and said "You are in good shape, you are fine, now get out." With that, I was sent back to Marksei, theoretically well; but instead of being transported in a truck, we were told to walk back to Marksei five miles away. On the way back, a number of us fainted and for some reason I will never understand, some of the Soviet guards carried me the rest of the way to Marksei.

54. In July 1945, after the new camp about 10 miles northeast of Marksei had been completed, 15,000 German POWs arrived who had been six weeks en route and all were in very poor shape upon arrival. Almost immediately, as many as 40 to 80 started to die daily and this number increased in the next few weeks. As soon as they died, the bodies were loaded on trucks and transported out into the country where a large working party from Marksei was kept busy digging holes in the ground for these bodies. I was driving a truck at that time and delivered many of the dead bodies to the burial area. These deaths were caused by some disease which I do not know the name of, but it is not surprising that the whole camp was wiped out because after taking a load of bodies to the burial grounds, I was directed to go to a bakery to pick up bread and sugar on return trips. The bread and sugar were placed on the same truck without first disinfecting it and I saw the food with blood on it being taken into the camp.

ATTITUDE OF SOVIET CIVILIANS TOWARDS GERMAN POWs

55. The attitude of Soviet citizens towards German POWs varied. It depended entirely upon the person and as a general rule, I found that the older Soviet people were inclined to be kind to the prisoners. At Marshansk, we were frequently marched through the market place and if we went slow enough and could escape the detection of our guards, some of the shopkeepers gave us small items of food such as potatoes, cabbage, or a little bread. On the

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other hand, I was once struck on the head with a large cabbage thrown at me by a young civilian who had no reason for throwing this cabbage at me other than hatred.

56. I suspect that prisoners could expect help in escaping from some of the older people. However, the young people were trained in the new ideas and in many cases were terrible. If they could have, I believe the young Soviet civilians would have killed all of the German prisoners because they were so mad at them. We would frequently be screamed at as we were marching to and from work by young Soviets who would say "We should kill you, you Fascists." There was open hatred.

WORK ASSIGNMENTS

Marshansk

57. My first work assignment at Marshansk was at the Soviet Army food depot which was about 10 km from the camp. This food depot had previously been an army training camp and a school for army officers. There were about 500 prisoners assigned to this food depot with me and our main work was handling the food that came into the depot. This food was mostly grain but it also included potatoes, cabbage, fish, cucumbers, and tomatoes, and it was distributed from this depot to the various Soviet Army units in the Marshansk area. The depot itself was made of stone and there were barracks for about 500 Soviet troops who were stationed at the depot. I do not think very much of the Soviet system for food handling and I was quite convinced that the whole situation was handled poorly and without any system. Most of the supervision was by soldiers although there were a few civilians at the depot; and none of them appeared very capable. They all tried to sneak out a little bit of food each day for their own purposes and to sell on the black market.

58. At the time I was working in this food depot, I had daily opportunity to see the young officers who were being trained and it appeared from the size of the column of men that were marched in front of us that there were between 300 and 400 officers in training at that time. I believe their training was for infantry work. The food depot was also connected with a railroad siding and I understand that this railroad track ran directly to Moscow from Marshansk. I worked at the food depot for about two months.

59. My next work assignment at Marshansk was in one of the six large saw mills that were located side by side on the bank of the Tsna River. This work was a great deal more strenuous and gave me one of my first indications of the cruel treatment that German POWs could expect to receive from the Soviets. Other prisoners were assigned to cutting trees in the woods upstream from the saw mills and the large logs were floated downstream to the saw mills. As prisoners, we were required to wade into the river in water up to our shoulders, grab a large log and then work it to the shore where anywhere from 20 to 40 prisoners then picked up the log and carried it to the saw mill. Soviet Army guards with machine guns stood on the bank and every time a prisoner failed to put his best efforts in pushing the logs to the shore, they were shot and their bodies allowed to drift downstream.

60. Most of these logs were fir or beech and the beechwood was first class wood. After gathering the logs into the saw mill, we were then required to operate the saws and cut the wood into boards which were loaded on freight cars and sent to Moscow for industrial purposes. I do not think that any of this wood was used for building houses because the lumber I saw that went into housing construction was of much poorer quality than any of the lumber we turned out at these saw mills.

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61. At each saw mill there were about 40 Soviet civilians supervising the operation and about 300 prisoners. There was also a State agent attached to each mill. The Soviets did nothing but guard the prisoners and supervise the sawing. Each mill had about seven different saws of different sizes. The equipment was poor and failed frequently and at each breakdown, the prisoners were held responsible and usually beaten by the guards for it. The equipment was made in the USSR and I noticed an inscription on one of the saws "Made in Moscow." The saw mills were powered by electricity and all the power came from the electric station in Tambov. There was also a coal mine in Marshansk and all the power for this coal mine which was electric also came from Tambov. I only lasted on this assignment for about one month and I am sure if I remained there longer I would not have survived the winter because the Soviets paid no attention to the temperature of the weather or the water and many of the prisoners contracted pneumonia as well as exhaustion from working in the cold water and then being forced to work in the saw mill after which we marched back to camp and slept with no blankets in cold and damp clothing.

Marksei

62. The first three months that I was in Marksei, our work assignments consisted mainly of gathering fire wood outside of the camp. On one occasion, a line of 2,000 men extended from the camp to the woods where wood was brought in, it being passed from one man to the next. We also built large food depots for the storage of food inside the camp.

63. My first job outside the camp was in building a food depot. I was then assigned to work in the construction of a large chemical factory that was located in a valley between the mountains northwest of Orak and about north of Marksei. On this job I was employed as a bricklayer and carpenter. I learned while working on this job that this factory had been started in 1939. No chemicals were being produced in 1945 as the USSR was still in the process of building the plant. One of the Soviets at the plant told me "We will start to work here as soon as the last prisoner of war gets out of here." Large storage buildings had already been constructed. A large electric power plant had been built nearby to furnish power especially for this plant.

64. I then became a truck driver and was sent to Orak on a number of occasions delivering building materials. I remember a naphtha processing plant where the naphtha was obtained from the district of the Volga through large pipes and I believe that benzene was being made out of it.

65. I also remember a large plant in Orak called the OCM. It was a large metal plant that made parts and armament for tanks. During the time that I was there, 10 new additions were added to the plant. Soviet political prisoners worked in this plant. In Buzuluk, to where I frequently drove, there was a tank unit just outside the city. There seem to be concentrations of tank units in this area. There was also a troop unit at Orak training in crossing rivers.

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